WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An ink jet recording apparatus for performing image formation on a recording medium by using a recording head having plural discharge ports being arranged to discharge ink from said discharge ports, comprising:

preliminary discharging means for performing preliminary discharges by discharging ink from said discharge ports irrespective of said image formation;

capping means for enabling a cap for capping said plural discharge ports to be in contact with and retract from the discharge port surface of said recording head where said discharge ports are formed; and

selection means for selecting whether said preliminary discharges are performed in the status of having said cap to be in contact with said discharge port surface or in the status of having said cap to be away from said discharge port surface, according to the number of ink discharges by said preliminary discharging means,

wherein said ink discharge number in the status of having said cap to be in contact is made larger than said ink discharge number in the status of having said cap to be away.

2. An ink jet recording head according to Claim 1, wherein when said preliminary discharges are performed in the status of having said cap to be away, said preliminary discharges are performed toward said cap or said preliminary discharges are performed toward an ink receiving portion other than said cap.

3. An ink jet recording apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising suction means for sucking said ink in said cap by giving negative pressure in said cap, wherein when said preliminary discharges are performed in the status of having said cap to be in contact, said cap is communicated with the air outside, and suction is also effectuated by said suction means.

4. An ink jet recording apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein when said suction and said preliminary discharges are performed, said suction is performed for a designated time in the status of having the inside of said cap communicated with the air outside after said preliminary discharges terminate.

5. An ink jet recording apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein when said suction and said

preliminary discharges are performed, said suction is performed for a designated time in the status of having the inside of said cap communicated with the air outside before said preliminary discharges begin.

6. An ink jet recording apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the discharge frequency in performing said suction and said preliminary discharges is lower than the discharge frequency in performing only said preliminary discharges.

7. An ink jet recording apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising wiping means for wiping off said ink adhering to said discharge port surface, wherein when a predetermined number of preliminary discharges is executed by said preliminary discharging means, said wiping means wipes off said ink adhering to said discharge port surface.

8. An ink jet recording apparatus for performing image formation on a recording medium by using a recording head having plural discharge ports being arranged to discharge ink from said discharge ports, comprising:

preliminary discharging means for performing

preliminary discharges by discharging ink from said discharge ports irrespective of said image formation;

capping means for enabling a cap for capping said plural discharge ports to be in contact with and retract from the discharge port surface of said recording head where said discharge ports are formed; and

selection means for selecting whether suction by suction means and said preliminary discharges are performed in the status of having said cap to be in contact with said discharge port surface and having the inside of said cap communicated with the air outside, said preliminary discharges are performed in the status of having said cap to be in contact with said discharge port surface, or said preliminary discharges are performed in the status of having the cap to be away from said discharge port surface, according to the number of ink discharges by said preliminary discharging means,

wherein said ink discharge number of said suction and said preliminary discharges being performed in the status of having said cap to be in contact is made larger than said ink discharge number of said preliminary discharges being performed in the status of having said cap to be

in contact, and said ink discharge number of said preliminary discharges being performed in the status of having said cap to be in contact is made larger than said ink discharge number in the status of having said cap to be away.

9. An ink jet recording head according to Claim 8, wherein when said preliminary discharges are performed in the status of having said cap to be away, said preliminary discharges are performed toward said cap or said preliminary discharges are performed toward an ink receiving portion other than said cap.

10. An ink jet recording apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein when said suction and said preliminary discharges are performed, said suction is performed for a designated time in the status of having the inside of said cap communicated with the air outside after said preliminary discharges terminate.

11. An ink jet recording apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein when said suction and said preliminary discharges are performed, said suction is performed for a designated time in the status of having the inside of said cap communicated with

the air outside before said preliminary discharges begin.

12. An ink jet recording apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein the discharge frequency in performing said suction and said preliminary discharges is lower than the discharge frequency in performing only said preliminary discharges.

13. An ink jet recording apparatus according to Claim 8, further comprising wiping means for wiping off said ink adhering to said discharge port surface, wherein when a predetermined number of preliminary discharges is executed by said preliminary discharging means, said wiping means wipes off said ink adhering to said discharge port surface.

14. An ink jet recording apparatus for performing image formation on a recording medium by using a recording head having plural discharge ports being arranged to discharge ink from said discharge ports, comprising:

preliminary discharging means for performing preliminary discharges by discharging ink from said discharge ports irrespective of said image formation;

capping means for enabling a cap for capping said plural discharge ports to be in contact with and retract from the discharge port surface of said recording head where said discharge ports are formed; and

preliminary discharge control means for controlling said preliminary discharging means to selectively perform said plurality of preliminary discharges having different discharge numbers of said ink, said control means controlling said preliminary discharge operations corresponding to the performance of said preliminary discharges in the status of having said cap to be in contact with said discharge port surface or to the performance of said preliminary discharges in the status of having said cap to be away from said discharge port surface, per plurality of said preliminary discharge operations.

15. An ink jet recording apparatus according to Claim 14, wherein the ink discharge number of said preliminary discharge operation in the status of having said cap to be in contact with said discharge port surface is made larger than the ink discharge number of said preliminary discharge operation in the status of having said cap to be away from said discharge port surface.